

**THE BANNER OF LOVE;  
RUSTLING IN THE  
MULBERRY LEAVES;  
THE DEW OF THE SPIRIT**

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The banner of love; Rustling in the mulberry leaves; The dew of the spirit by W. O. Purton

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THE DEW OF THE SPIRIT.**

BY THE

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NOTE.—*Of the following Papers, 'The Rustling in the Mulberry Trees' and 'The Dew of the Spirit' have already appeared in 'The Home Visitor.'*

*The first Paper is the substance of a Sermon preached in Christ Church, Worthing, the first Sunday in Advent.*

## THE BANNER OF LOVE.

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**Y**OU are captives. You have been conquered,—subjugated. A yoke is upon you. Nothing higher is known about you than that you are a Conqueror's servants. Not your own will, but His, you are striving to do. Every thought must be bent into obedience, made submissive, unto Him. 'Kept' by the Conqueror's power you are drawn with bands in the train of His followers. Nor dare you ever think of leaving the ranks that march beneath His banner.

And yet you are freemen,—willing captives, not slaves. The yoke of your service is very 'easy.' The more perfectly you do the Conqueror's will—the more contented you become. As more and more your thoughts are brought into obedience unto Him, as you feel more and more that you are kept,—you lose not dignity or fail in wisdom. Nay, your steps are firmer; the pathway before you becomes less difficult, your bearing more

dignified and bright with gladness. Yes, you rejoice because the might of the Conqueror is perfectly shown in your weakness. The 'bands' which tie you to the chariot—you kiss them lovingly, clasp them, deck them with flowers of grateful praise. And the flag waving over you—every rustle of its folds and every sight of its inscription—fills you with joy. All your dearest, purest, brightest hopes hover round it. Happy then with happiness which rests upon your position in the Conqueror's train, you cry exultingly—'We follow His banner!'

And how is this?

You whom I have addressed, know well how it is. You know who is the Conqueror, and what is the Banner. For I have been speaking to true followers of the Lord Jesus. And the response of all such,—the pass-word throughout the ranks of the Christian army—is one and the same:—'*The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me; He made me submissive in the day of His power; my joy and strength is in the following of His Will; His banner over me is Love.*'\*

Yes, we are under THE BANNER OF LOVE.

The Captain of our Salvation called us, and con-

\* Song of Solomon, ii. 4.



strained us to obey : He keeps us : He leads us, bending our will, reigning within our hearts : He directs our steps. And all this in love. All love from first to last. Love saying—'Take my yoke upon you.' Love bidding us reckon it meat and drink to do our Master's will. Love calling us to partake in the afflictions of the Man of sorrows. Love humbling us, testing and proving us ; holding us fast, leading us in paths we naturally shrink from. Love in it all. Love wondrous, amazing ; love all-wise, and all-mighty.

Our Conqueror's Banner tells us of what He has done for us, of what He is doing, and of what He has promised to do. And every letter in it is mercy and loving-kindness. From ages past on to the eternity before us, His purposes towards His own are all of love.

*'I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee. I drew thee with cords of a man, with bands of love.'*

These are the inscriptions on our Captain's Banner—these, traced in His own precious blood. For He so loved us as even to give Himself for us. Could there be greater love than this? As you read those blood-imprinted words of wondrous mercy, your eyes grow dim with tears, and your heart swells with joy too deep to tell. *The Captain of our salvation gave HIMSELF!* 'We love Him because He first loved us.'

This then is the secret of our happy service. '*The love of Christ constraineth us.*' Not dragged by resistless might, but drawn by sweet bands of affection, we follow on right gladly; constrained, yet truly free; warring our warfare not as conscripts of a cruel despot, or even as the hirelings of an uncaring master, nor as drilled automatons of a mere machine. No! no! Our Captain's banner is LOVE. We are His glory, His delight. And our joy, our pride, is to fight the good fight just when, and how, and where, He bids us.

'I've been the devil's slave these twenty years,' said a Shropshire collier, on his conversion; 'now I'm going to be the slave of Jesus!' Poor Harry —. He had been in bondage so long, had been so fast bound in the fetters of sin, that he could not at once realise the glorious liberty of the Gospel: he should still, in some sort, he thought, live as a slave. But he has now, this long time, been rejoicing in that blessed liberty, where-with Christ has made us free.

Are there not many Christians who make the same mistake which that collier did? Christians of education, of intelligence?

I think there are many, indeed very many (among earnest and conscientious believers), who do not know the Gospel-exposition of **THE BANNER OF LOVE.**

Not to allude to those who are in bondage to rites

and ceremonies, in bondage to priestly power, I cannot think that those rightly read their Captain's banner who march in His ranks with faltering steps, fearful, doubting, ill-assured. They do not 'joy in Him,' because they do dishonour to the fulness of His love. It is in 'the full assurance of hope' that we cheerfully march on our way rejoicing; 'understanding what the will of the Lord is,' and, as willing soldiers, happy in the doing of it.

For this is the scriptural biography of every true believer. *Christ 'brought me to the banqueting-house, and His banner over me was Love.'*

There may have been with you an accusing conscience and the terrors of the law. Sharp-weapons may have pierced; heavy blows may have laid low. Nevertheless this was all of love—love all-wise, unspeakably tender. Yes, Christ's love. Christ made you weary, that in Him you might have rest. He made you 'hungry' that He might feed you 'with good things.' He made you feel homeless, tempest-tossed, destitute, that He might lead you to the banqueting-house,—

'Your refuge from the stormy blast,  
And your eternal HOME.'

Your being awakened, aroused, convicted, comforted, your being saved, is wholly and entirely of love. *and*